



DON SCHAEFFER

## WHITE OPOSSUM SPOTTING

While hiking in the Kettle Moraine State Forest we came upon this fellow who climbed a few feet up this tree as we approached. With his thick white fur, he was undoubtedly the best looking opossum I've ever seen. If it wasn't for his dark eyes we would have thought he was an albino.

Don Schaeffer  
Wauwatosa, Wis.

## WISCONSIN NATURAL RESOURCES MAGAZINE IN THE CLASSROOM

For a few years I've been thinking that some articles from *Wisconsin Natural Resources* magazine would be great to use with my 4th and 5th grade students, be it for the descriptive writing or the science connections. Well, today I gave it a try. I needed an article to use to teach note taking. I flipped through a handy back issue from August 2011 and spied Kathryn Kahler's article about newts and decided to use it. As I read the first paragraphs to students, I was worried that the vocabulary and concepts would be beyond them. But as I asked them to read and eventually respond to key ideas we might write down for our note taking practice, I was pleasantly surprised to notice that the level of engagement and understanding was particularly high, notably by male students who aren't commonly involved in our discussions! I even had a student share that his mom is part of related research with regenerative medicine. I just wanted to share appreciation from this young reader group as well as from an educator who loves connecting students with writing that means something for them.

Marcia Dressel  
Osceola, Wis.

## TRADING GROUSE FOR TURKEY... OR WAS IT MUSKIE?

We enjoyed reading the "Trading ruffed grouse for wild turkey" article by R.J Longwitz, in the February issue. 2015 will mark the 60th year we have journeyed to our summer cabin on Boulder Lake outside of Boulder Junction. During a number of those years, we lived in Missouri and were aware of the introduction of the Missouri turkey into Wisconsin. It was interesting to track their migration north. We would stop one year at a southern rest stop along I-39 and see some birds in the fields beyond the rest stop property. Then, a few years later, they appeared at the next rest stop north and so on right up to the far north. In the past 5 years, we regularly see wild turkeys in the Boulder Junction area. Our neighbor even took a picture of one just outside our cabin two years ago. The part of the story that was news to us was that Wisconsin traded Missouri the turkey for ruffed grouse. All these years, we understood that Wisconsin traded Missouri musky fingerlings for them to introduce into a number of their lakes. The most successful introduction we understood was into Lake Pom de Terre in southwestern Missouri. Would you help us out with understanding if the musky story is true, and if there were the muskies in addition to the grouse? Thank you.

Connie and Jake Moelk  
Boulder Junction, Wis.



CAITLYN RIZZO

## RARE SCARLET TANAGER

We have just seen a scarlet tanager. No question of what it was. It was my granddaughter Caitlyn Rizzo that took the picture of it. I have lived in Kenosha all my life and never seen one. They put out oranges for orioles and this scarlet tanager has been coming to feed on them.

Chuck and Caitlyn Rizzo  
Kenosha, Wis.



WILLIAM AGGER

## A BATTLE, A VICTOR, AN IMPRINT

During a late winter cross-country ski through Mississippi River bottom backwaters, I was treated with a bald eagle extravaganza. From above the bluff tops, two adults began to "dog fight." After interlocking talons, they cartwheeled earthward, disappearing beyond a stand of silver maples. The apparent victor quickly climbed back into view, but the other did not. Curious, I skied towards the "crash site," only to see the second eagle take to wing. At the point of impact, there was this nearly perfect "eagle snow angel." The imperfections on the right wing and beyond the beak are claw hop spots, made after the bird recovered and took to the air.

William Agger  
La Crosse, Wis.

David Neuswanger, retired DNR fisheries team supervisor, in Hayward responds: *All of Missouri's muskellunge during the early days of the program came from the Linesville Fish Culture Station at Lake Pymatuning, Pa. They would collect and fertilize the eggs at Linesville, then ship the fertilized eggs to Blind Pony Hatchery in Missouri to be hatched, reared and stocked into 8,000-acre Lake Pomme de Terre as fall fingerlings. By spring of 1992, I estimated that half those age-10 fish were still alive in the lake — males averaging 36 inches and females averaging 42 inches. As those fish matured, Wisconsin DNR Fish Manager Dennis Scholl provided me with Wisconsin fyke net specifications, which allowed us to circumvent a problem that had long plagued the biologists at Pomme de Terre — that of capturing enough wild adult broodstock to rear our own fish and end our dependency on fertilized eggs or fry from Pennsylvania. Using Wisconsin-style fyke nets, we were highly successful in capturing our own broodstock muskellunge in Hazel Creek Lake from 1989 onward.*





TERRY HELLER

#### WASPS CONGREGATE ON MILWEED PLANTS

I'd like to share my photo.

*Terry Heller  
Black River Falls, Wis.*



CHAD CAMPBELL

#### PHEASANT HUNTING BY SUNRISE

Hoss, and his owner Chad Campbell, hunt pheasants in the fall of 2014. The pair looks forward to the pheasant season all year long.

*Chad Campbell  
Winneconne, Wis.*



JIM EVENSTAD

#### BOBCAT BASKING IN THE SUN IN THE COLD OF WINTER

I saw this lynx (I believe it is anyway) walk across our drive on a warm sunny day this past spring. I did not get a pic of it walking, but its hind end was higher than its front. Also, color was solid, not mottled. It sat apparently sunning itself and did not flinch when I stepped out to get this pic. Anyway, is this a lynx?

*Jim Evenstad  
Hayward, Wis.*

*This is a beautiful bobcat! What a great photo. White on the tip of the tail is characteristic of bobcat; lynx have all black tails. Also lynx feet would be proportionally larger as they have giant feet they use as snowshoes to walk on the top of snow. While most bobcats have some spotting, not all do, and you can see faint barring on the legs, which is typical of bobcat. This is a pale, handsome bobcat.*



WES MARTIN

WES MARTIN

#### TURKEYS SPARRING

I wanted to share my photos of turkeys sparring in western Wisconsin.

*Wes Martin  
Trempealeau, Wis.*

#### CANOE ARTICLES SPARK JOY AND ACTIVITY

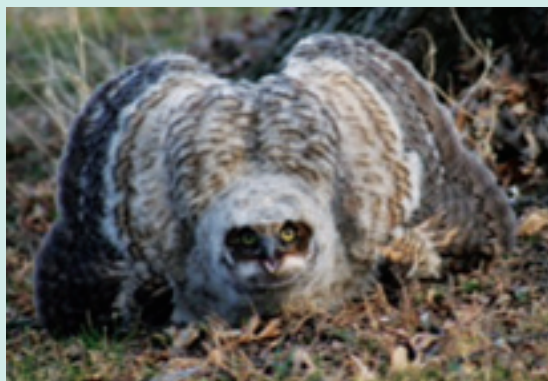
I'm a senior citizen and have lived my entire life in the Merton area. I enjoy *Wisconsin Natural Resources* magazine and especially liked the February 2015 edition, as my wife and I like to kayak and canoe. I recently spent an evening reading the two articles about kayaking the Tomahawk River and canoeing the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway. I got out my Gazetteer and arm-chaired my way down the water with these authors. It was a most pleasant trip on a cold February night.

*Ron Rellatz  
Merton, Wis.*

#### OWLETS IN THE DAYLIGHT

On Easter we spotted an owlet near our home. I managed to get a couple pictures. I feel we are really lucky to have seen this, not something you run across every day.

*Sharon Schoen  
Union Grove, Wis.*



SHARON SCHOEN



SHARON SCHOEN



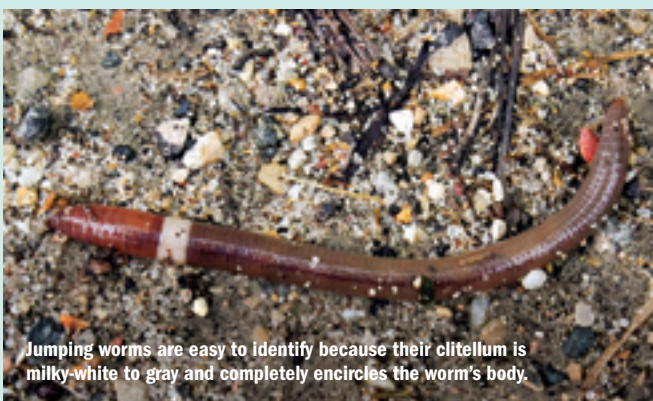


ANNETTE SCHRAB CLARK

#### EASTERN PHOEBE TAKES BREAK FROM SPRING MATING RITUALS

I took the photo right outside off my deck which is about 14 feet up from the ground, so I see the birds in the midst of the trees. It was midday and the birds seemed to be mating with them chasing one another. I managed to catch one still long enough for this photo.

Annette Schrab Clark  
Reeseville, Wis.



BERNADETTE WILLIAMS

Jumping worms are easy to identify because their clitellum is milky-white to gray and completely encircles the worm's body.

The article ("Jumping worms: There's a new creepy-crawly in Wisconsin," June 2015) states under the section "problems caused by earthworms" that all worms are harmful to the forest floor. Is this true for garden soils?

John Hauser  
Sherwood, Wis.

Co-author Bernadette Williams, conservation biologist in the DNR Forest Health Program, responds: *No, the earthworms in your garden are not something you should be overly concerned about. Heavily disturbed urban areas like backyard gardens are most frequently inhabited by nonnative European earthworms; many of which have been introduced accidentally or intentionally through multiple means to turn, aerate and fertilize your soil. Vegetable and flower gardens can benefit by the presence of worms because you're growing an annual crop and the worms are doing what they do best, recycling organic matter. When it comes to jumping worms we don't know what the long-term impacts will be to our backyard gardens or our forests. What we do know is that they are a new invader to our state but one we want you to be on the lookout for.*

#### COMMENT ON A STORY?

Send your letters to: Readers Write, WNR magazine, P.O. Box 7191, Madison, WI 53707. Or email letters to [dnrmagazine@wisconsin.gov](mailto:dnrmagazine@wisconsin.gov). Limit letters to 250 words and include your name and the community from which you are writing.

#### PARTLY ALBINO BIRD IN DARLINGTON

My friend and I were looking out the window of her ground floor apartment in Darlington and watched a strange bird flitting around a small evergreen tree. It was about the size of a cat bird; with dark gray to black coloring, but it had a completely white head; like a bald eagle. I can't find it in any of my bird books. Is it possible it was partly albino? We watched it for several minutes before it flew away. Unfortunately, we didn't have a camera, but we hope you might be able to identify it for us.

Anthony Wand  
Monroe, Wis.

Anthony, thanks for your letter. We love getting hand-written notes from our readers. Unfortunately, without a picture we can't be certain of the species. Our birding experts do agree with your original interpretation — it most likely was a partly albino (leucistic) bird. It doesn't sound like anything else that we have in Wisconsin.

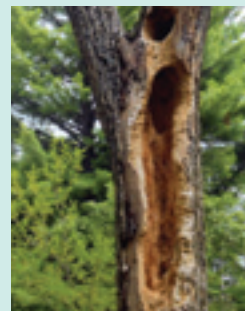
#### ELECTRIC HORNETS, WOODPECKER LIVE IN HARMONY

Living in Marquette County near Montello, I am used to seeing nature take its interesting course. In September, my daughter Karen said I should look at the electric meter. I was surprised to find the meter was entirely covered by a huge hornets nest. The meter box was also partially covered. The nest was 18 inches long, 13 inches wide and 9 inches deep. The inhabitants were bald-faced hornets and judging by the traffic flow, there were probably several hundred occupying the nest. Adams Columbia Electric Co-op no longer has meter readers, so the colony was not disturbed all summer. Across the yard was another fascinating sight — a pileated woodpecker making a huge hole in a tree not far away. In 3 days, the hole was over 3 feet long, 6 inches wide and 7 inches deep. A week later, the big bird returned to enlarge its prior work another foot up and made another smaller hole above the big one. The bird was looking for insects that were living in the dead tree. I plan on having the top of the tree trimmed off with the dead branches and leave the remaining tree standing in the hope that he will return to work on the rest of the trunk. Unfortunately, we had a wind storm during the fall that broke off a branch of the tree and part of the small hole broke off with it. Sadly, my father passed away this year. Being a veteran in WWII and the Korean War, he was very fascinated by the outdoors and nature and would have loved to see the woodpecker at work. My dad always had numerous flower beds and he always fed his birds. The pileated woodpecker did come back and started a new hole under the long one. I was able to tell him about the bird the day before he passed, and he had a big smile on his face. The woodpecker is still working on the same hole today.

Kenneth Peters  
Montello, Wis.



KENNETH AND KAREN PETERS



KENNETH AND KAREN PETERS

#### SANDHILL WILDLIFE AREA - HOME OF THE BISON

The "Bison and butterflies" article (April 2015) reminded me that I have not been to the Sandhill Wildlife Area since the mid-70s, when I was a student at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. My wife, then a teacher in Wisconsin Rapids, and I used to bike the roads and cross-country ski there. A sign by the pasture indicated that bison were present then but we never saw them during our five years of going there. For readers who may be interested in the history of Sandhill, I suggest the book *Live Arrival Guaranteed: A Sandhill Memoir*, by Hazel Grange (Lost River Press, Inc. 1996, first printing). She and her husband, Wallace Byron Grange, bought the land in parcels during the Depression and turned it into a successful game farm (hence, the origin of the tall fences, by the way), then sold it to the Wisconsin Conservation Commission in 1961, at the signing ceremony in Madison with Gov. Gaylord Nelson and Conservation Director Lester Voigt. Anyway, this book was written from an interesting perspective with a touch of humor as well. One will not find it to be a dry, boring read.

Kurt Sroka  
Somerset, Wis. (aka squirrel haven)



SUBMITTED BY JAMES SHIELY

#### SPRING FISHING REPORT ADDITION

Hello, I'm writing because the spring 2015 Fishing Report neglected to mention Pierce County which borders the St. Croix River. The St. Croix River is a fantastic fishery, particularly for smallmouth bass, northern pike, walleyes and muskies. Several years ago I caught a 44-inch, 24-pound northern pike on the St. Croix, near Prescott. I've also caught several 45-inch muskies on it. It's a wild and scenic river which makes it a joy to fish, and I wanted to share it with you.

*James Shiely  
Prescott, Wis.*

#### ROBIN BEHAVIOR EXPLAINED

Several weeks ago we noticed a robin beginning to build a nest on our eaves within about 3 feet of our big picture window in our living room. Everything was fine and we looked forward to watching their progress, but within a couple of days I heard noises and observed the bird fly up to our window with grass in its beak and claw and peck at the window. This was repeated over and over, morning, afternoon and night. I cut out some bird shapes and put them on the window but the bird persisted. I hung a large 18-inch wingspan bright red tin cardinal in front of the window and found the bird landing on the wing of the cardinal knocking the cardinal into the window. So, I bought a falcon and hung it in front of the window but heard pecking sounds. The robin had landed on the head of the falcon and was pecking at the window. I gave up and I just tolerated the sounds morning and evening. The nest was never completed, and after a week, the daily sounds stopped. I sure hope that they found a nesting spot.

*Jean Hamersky  
Green Bay, Wis.*

*In short, the bird took its reflection as a threat and was attacking the "intruders" in defense of its nesting territory.*

#### NO ACCESS TO THE WEB?

**Don't have access to a link we mention in a story? Let us know when you want to follow a link we list. We'll do what we can to get you a copy of the material if it is available free of charge and is relatively short in length.**